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The place of the biitaha^{n}wu is not certain, as no informants were found who would positively express themselves on this matter. It is universally regarded as having been the most sacred and most dangerous of all the ceremonies, these qualities being thought to have led to its abandonment before any of the other dances. It can probably be concluded from this that it was last in the series, and performed by the oldest men. 171 796

As among the Arapaho, but somewhat more clearly, each dance refers symbolically to a certain animal. This symbolism is as follows. 171 796

The fly-dance takes its name from flies or mosquitoes, and was given or instituted by a mosquito. During part of the ceremony the dancers imitate the actions of mosquitoes. 825

The crazy-dance has comparatively little reference to any animal. The participants, however, wear anklets of badger-skin, and an entire badger-skin is used in ceremonies at the time of starting the dancing.

The kit-fox lodge was given by the kit-foxes, and a kit-fox skin is used somewhat analogously to the badger-skin in the crazy-dance.

In the dog-dance the dancers of highest degree represent shaggy dogs. It is also said that the participants in the ceremony largely eat dogs during its course. Among the Arapaho a dog is said to have instituted this lodge, and the Gros Ventre have a similar myth. [262]

In the naina^{n}naha^{n}w^{n} the dancers sing for the buffalo, and it is said that they always succeed in causing them to appear near the camp. Among the Arapaho the dancers represent both buffalo and prairie-chickens. The symbolic reference to prairie-chickens among the Gros Ventre is found in their sun-dance; their equivalent of the Arapaho rabbit-tent in this ceremony being called "prairie-chicken tent," and the singers in it "prairie-chickens" and "prairie-hens."

The biitaha^{n}w^{n}, as among the Arapaho, has connection with thunder. The dancers are painted over the body with dots which represent hail. If one of them violates the regulations of the dance, it is thought that it will begin to rain and that the offender may be struck by lightning. The Gros Ventre have an additional symbolic connection of their sun-dance with thunder, which is not strictly paralleled among the Arapaho. [302] [821]

The women in their dance among both tribes represent buffalo, and the actions gone through in this ceremony are in both tribes probably more directly imitative of the animals symbolized than in any of the men's ceremonies.

What has been said about the Arapaho in regard to the relation of the entire ceremonial organization to the lives of the men of the tribe, and in regard to the relative importance of the religious, military, and social functions of the age-companies constituting the organization, appears to apply 171 796 561

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Fig. 33 shows one of the small quill-wrapped hoops carried on a stick in the fly-dance. It is about three inches across, and lacks the feathers once attached to it. The hoop is not continuous, but consists of four slightly curved sticks. Each of these is wound with yellow quills, and in the middle with black (really dark-brown) fibres. The quill-wrapping encloses a sinew strand, which passes from one stick to the other, holding them together into a flexible, somewhat four-cornered hoop. At each of the four dark marks an eagle-plume was formerly attached, and in addition an eagle-feather (specimen Museum No. 50 1936b) was hung from the hoop. This hoop was made, for the man from whom it was obtained, at the time he took part in the fly-dance. 796 293

The Crazy-Dance.

The second ceremony, the crazy-dance, corresponds pretty closely to the Arapaho crazy-dance. When it was summer, and the time came to make the ceremony in fulfilment of the pledge previously given, the different bands of the tribe gathered in a single camp-circle. Certain men, leaving this camp, then went out to select a suitable site for the dance. When they had found this, the camp started for the place, while they made piles of buffalo-chips in a circle, indicating the place for the camp. The company about to make the ceremony gathered at night, and, taking a pipe of black stone, went stealthily to the tent of an old man whom they had selected to put up the lodge (that is, direct the ceremony) for them. They entered his tent while he was sleeping, woke him, and handed him the pipe. When he signified his acceptance by taking it, they kissed him in thanks, and made him presents. After he had smoked the pipe, he told them to obtain "grandfathers," which they did. 796

When the preparations had begun to be made, crows and owls were killed by the dancers, because they used their feathers. The dancers' regalia consisted of anklets of badger-skin and of quill-embroidered leglets, to both of which four crow-feathers and buffalo-fetlocks, or antelope-hoofs, were attached as ornaments and rattles. Around the head they wore a narrow strip of skin embroidered with quill-work, to which an owl's head was tied on one side. Around their necks hung another quill-embroidered thong, at the end of which was a whistle of eagle-wing bone. A buffalo robe painted red was worn. A round hole was cut in this through which the head was put, so that the dancers did not have to hold the garment in place. The piece cut out for the head was not entirely detached, but left hanging down the back. Two long streamers of skin hung down the back [825] [292] [534]

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crushed and mixed with fat. When the painting was completed, food from the young men's parents was brought to the old men. The old men also presented their "grandsons" with food. The food was then eaten. During the day the dancers and their "grandfathers" were in the dancing-lodge. In connection with the beginning of the dancing, a badger-skin was used. This was entirely wrapped, except at the head, in a flat rope of rawhide, half of which (one side?) was painted red, the other half black. This skin lay on the ground before the pledger of the dance, in or in front of his small enclosure, with the head toward the east. Glowing charcoal was laid before the row of bows, and sweet-grass (niasō; Arapaho, niox^{u}) was put on the coals to incense the bows. The pledger, rising, took the badger-skin, and, holding it with the head pointing forward, walked slowly around the inside of the lodge, and then to the smouldering incense, over which he made four passes with the skin; then returning to his enclosure, he laid the badger-skin on the ground. Taking out a stick tied in with the skin, he struck the skin as hard as he could. At this, a singer at the middle of the back or western end of the lodge — who held a stick as high as a man, wrapped with buckskin, and with buffalo or antelope hoofs hanging along its length — struck the end on the ground, thus beginning the rattling that accompanied the singing. The old men began to sing, while the dancers simultaneously blew their whistles, and cried "Yaa!" The old men stood up and sang, and the dancers went to them, each of them to his "grandfather," usually three or four to one old man. The old men then drilled them, showing them how to dance and how to handle their bows and their robes. It seems that the dancers stood at the opening of the lodge, somewhat on the south. After dancing to four songs, during which they whistled and at the end of each of which they cried "Yaa," they dashed off in a race around a monument that had been erected at some distance to the southeast. If one of the division of tall men returned to the lodge first and thus won the race for his side, the short men filled pipes for the tall men and presented them to them to smoke, and, of course, *vice versâ*.

After the cessation of the dancing, and when it was dark, old men cried out to the people to retire to their tents, the dancers' wives being about to go out with the "grandfathers." As the women went out, the dancers stood in the lodge in a circle, singing loudly and shouting in conclusion. The "grandfathers" went to the north of the camp-circle, where they stood in a row. Their "grand-daughters," that is to say, the dancers' wives, each carrying a pipe, followed them, and stood behind them. They addressed their "grandfathers," praying them to take the pipe and smoke it. After much persuasion, the old man accepted the pipe. Then the woman prayed to him again, asking him to pray in her behalf, that she might be

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side of the bundle, it is said. Except at such ceremonies as this, only the keeper could touch the pipe.

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Pipes were sometimes given to other tribes, and were sometimes received from them. Sometimes they were carried by war-parties. One of the three pipes still in existence is said to have been given by the Cheyenne to the Crow, and by the latter to the Gros Ventre, when peace was made between the two tribes. The stem is ornamented with feathers, weasel-skins, and at the end with a bunch of eagle-feathers. The sacred pipes were kept wrapped in many pieces of skin or cloth, and hung up in the tent. In good weather they were hung on a stand of three or four sticks, behind the tent. The keepers of the sacred pipes observed stringent rules. They could not eat of the head or back of any animal, nor of any part of the white-tailed deer, nor any eggs. They were not allowed to bathe, or to paint (except red), or to take the ashes out of the tent. They had to smoke in certain ways. They did not eat dogs, or allow them in the tent; nor did they let dogs touch them, or walk over their legs, or walk before them, while they were smoking. The keepers of the sacred pipes wore their hair uncut and uncombed. They could not cut it until they had given the pipe to another keeper. The hair was worn tied in a bunch just above the forehead. Fig. 42 shows such a bunch of matted hair, said to have been that of the grandfather of the father of the man who was the oldest in the tribe in 1901. This former keeper of the pipe became so old that he lost most of his hair, and the bunch shown was cut off by him before it should drop off. To this hair the later owner of the pipe, his present great-grandson, tied the first of his own teeth to fall out from old age: they are contained in a small cloth sack.

[648] [528]

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[825]

[302]

Fig. 42 (50 1902). Matted Hair. Length, 41 cm.

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was like the flat rocks on which women pound berries, perfectly round, rough above, and perfectly smooth on the under side. Many men lifting together could not move it; but when offerings were made to it, and it was asked to rise, one man was able to lift it easily. Several people tried to sleep near it in order to dream about it, but none of them ever staid the whole night through. They would dream that it was a large metal kettle coming toward them on legs, and filled with boiling water, whereupon they jumped up and fled.

West of the present Gros Ventre Reservation there was, until the whites took it away, a stone shaped like a person, except that it lacked the face. This was once a Snake Indian. A war-party saw him sitting on a hill, and pursued him into a flat. They had nearly caught him when he turned to stone and has been there ever since. Once, as a camp went by and the people made offerings of calico and other property, a man said, "Why do you do that?" Taking a club, he knocked off the head of the figure. The man died the same summer.

A complete buffalo of stone, with hump, horns, ribs, and other parts, half of it underground, has been seen by the Gros Ventre, and many offerings and prayers have been made to it.

To the north of the Gros Ventre Reservation is a lake shaped like a buffalo, with legs and all parts complete. The tail runs out into a river, the hoofs are patches of brush, and the horns are streaks of timber of the shape of horns.

Lizards are thought to bite persons and then to hang fast to the wound, sucking the flesh into themselves. It is said that a certain man was bitten and the lizard could not be pulled off. The man's flesh had to be cut off around the lizard's mouth.

There is believed to be a kind of bear with one white fore-leg, which is fiercer than the grizzly. The jack-rabbit is called "white rabbit;" and the cottontail; "left-hand rabbit." The prairie-dog is called "large gopher" (?); and the mink, "prairie-dog weasel." The bat's bite is thought to be exceedingly poisonous.

2: Flannery E-5 (1940-1948) 1953
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successfully hunted than antelope. While the finest clothing was made from deer, elk was preferred for some purposes such as moccasins and warm shirts and coats—it being more durable but not equally as flexible.

For winter wear, caps and mittens of beaver or otter were made for men and boys. Beaver skin served as a breech clout for the men in winter, although antelope was preferred for this purpose the rest of the year, unless cloth were available, since the latter was more comfortable than hide which chafed the skin so badly.

Ordinarily unornamented clothing was worn, but for special events, particularly when the whole tribe was together, everyone dressed in his best. Being well-dressed was as important to the Gros Ventres as being well-mounted on ceremonial and social occasions. The effect on both the eye and the ear was taken into account in the ornamentation. Dyed porcupine quill embroidery lent color, and mica—first heated, then powdered and rubbed over a robe—glistened beautifully. Polished deer-hoofs as edging for a robe or dangling from leggings or garters "made such a nice sound when one walked." This feeling both for color and sound was carried over when material from the whites was at hand, beadwork tending to supplant the quill embroidery and scraps of bright colored cloth and of metal serving as "dangles." [18]

Elk teeth, however, were said to be "the greatest decoration of the Gros Ventres." They were used principally for girls' and women's dresses. Not so long ago there was a man at Hays who wore a vest trimmed with elk teeth, and people would say to him: "You crazy thing, only women have that kind of decoration!" But he was unconventional and would retort: "Well, I dance, too, and I want to look nice." Everyone would laugh, but he persisted in wearing that vest. Human hair as fringe and on moccasins was proudly worn by men who had taken scalps.

Mink, otter, weasel, muskrat and kit-fox were all used as trimmings, and occasionally the whole pelt of mink, otter or muskrat was made into a bag, or tobacco pouch, or other small container. Feathers, especially eagle feathers, were highly prized, and red

[18] For the detailed comparative analysis of Decorative Art of the Gros Ventres and other plains tribes, see Kroeber, 1908, pp. 151–79.

2: Flannery E-5 (1940-1948) 1953
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the contrary, held to be holy and given special care.[8] They mentioned nevertheless that women of child-bearing age refrained from eating the two strips of flesh along the anterior of the backbone of buffalo lest twins result.

Coming Daylight said that she had heard of cases in the old days where twins would be separated,—one kept by the parents and the other adopted by someone else. Personally, however, she did not approve of this policy and when her daughter-in-law gave birth to twins she told her: "Be proud of them. Dress them alike and they will grow up well. Don't think more of one than of the other." She gave the same advice to her granddaughter when she in turn bore twins. The advice was not heeded in this instance and both the granddaughter and her husband adored one and neglected the other so that Coming Daylight herself took the neglected one. These twins were not quite a year old when the one loved by its parents died.

A middle-aged woman said that she had always heard regarding twins that they should be treated just alike and that the mother should always take both wherever she went and never leave one behind. Her own experience was a sad one. When her twins were about seven months old, one of them got sick and she had to take it to the hospital. The people at Hays told her: "You shouldn't leave one twin here." She, however, wanted to stay with the sick one, but the doctors sent her home. The twin left in the hospital died and people told her: "You shouldn't have left one there without the other."

Pregnancy and Childbirth

The only indication from these two oldest women informants of belief in prenatal impression was the remark of Coming Daylight when telling the story of a young man who opened the belly of a deer he had killed and found therein two young, each of which had "human faces." She said: "So they concluded that even animals get afraid and the young are marked." A younger woman mentioned that she had heard that if a pregnant woman looks at some-

[8] Kroeber, 1908, p. 182, gives the special names by which twins were called.

2: Flannery E-5 (1940-1948) 1953
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"They usually cut the cord long, say four to six inches, because they were afraid the infant would bleed to death if they cut it short. You kind of drain it and get it cleaned out and tie it once. Apply a powdered root and then put a band around the body. It usually takes four days before it drops off." Since the cord is part of the body and they wanted to keep it close to its owner, when the cord came off, they placed it in a small fancy bag filled with sweetgrass or tobacco and pinned the bag to the clothing right at the back of the neck. Singer said that she had heard that boys used to wear this little bag tied to the wrist rather than at the back of the neck as girls did. Good care was taken of the bag until adulthood. The bag was usually in the shape of a turtle, with a little head. Although Coming Daylight had made two such bags, she didn't know why they used this shape except that it had been done thus for generations.[5] Mary's grandmother, however, made a little container for Mary's own son and it was in the shape of a snake with a head. Mary added: "And the Gros Ventres don't like snakes either. But my grandmother made that one in the shape of a snake on account of a dream she had."

The afterbirth was disposed of just as soon as possible, preferably by having someone place it good and high in the branches of a tree.[6] The person who disposed of the afterbirth was not supposed to let anyone see him do so, although the informants did not know the reason for the secrecy. It is more customary at present to burn the afterbirth as the whites do, but Coming Daylight remarked that she had done that only once,—on the occasion when she was caught out in the open all alone and had to deliver herself.

A mother rested quite a while after her child was born because it was said that working would make her sweat and that would hurt her milk. The child of a woman who worked a great deal immediately after its birth would not grow up to be so healthy as the child of one who took it easy. In the opinion of Coming Daylight and of Singer a woman should sit up only after four days and get up and be walking around in about ten days. Coming Daylight her-

[5] For discussion of these navel amulets and illustrations thereof, see Kroeber, 1908, pp. 166–67, and plate IX.

[6] "If it were left lying to be handled, the child would be afflicted with sores." Kroeber, 1908, p. 181.

2: Flannery E-5 (1940-1948) 1953
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846 self had to get up sooner and help with cooking because she was an only wife, except for the short time during her first marriage when her sister was co-wife. The midwife usually stayed and looked after the infant for a few days, at least until the cord came off.

Coming Daylight always put on a belt of rawhide about a foot wide immediately after delivery and laced it up tighter each day. She said the Gros Ventre women were strict about this practice as it "put the figure back into place."

If a woman were able to rest quietly after childbirth the flow should stop in about two weeks. If she worked, it was longer, perhaps a month. At any rate, after the flow stopped, a woman wrapped a blanket around herself and someone then held under the blanket a pan of live coals on which medicine had been sprinkled. Woman claimed they felt much better after this "fumigation." There was also another medicine which Coming Daylight described as "good to clean you out after childbirth." This was made from a powdered root, a little pinch of which was put in a couple of quarts of water and turned the water about the color of tea. There was no bitter taste and the patient drank it like tea and instead of water.

[757]

[834] It was said that Gros Ventre men did not resume marital relations until at least a month after the baby was born,—often they deferred the resumption of relations even longer.

883 There was medicine given to make the mother's milk come. It was made from the same root as that used in the Crazy Dance. [278] The infant was not put to the breast immediately, as someone else drew out the "first milk" (colostrum) and spit it out. "After [825] that, the milk would be the right blue color. Should a woman be all alone when her child was born, she might have puppies draw out that 'first milk.'" Cora believes it is absolutely necessary to follow this rule. When her own daughter, for example, delivered her firstborn, an old woman offered to draw off this "first milk," but the daughter refused—so now she can give milk only from one breast and has to supplement her infant's feeding with milk from a bottle. No water or oil was given the infant before its first nursing. They started the baby to nurse after the colostrum had been drawn off "because there is something in the mother's milk that cleans the baby out."

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863 might even 'fuss' a little with him, saying something like: 'Look at you! I thought I told you to urinate. I'm trying to make you do it at the right time, and you want to hold back!' But we were not harsh with infants because we knew they have to learn. Anyway, if you misjudged the time, all you had to do was to throw out the powdered chips and put in fresh ones. The old way was much better. These diaper-babies around here now are much more trouble."

[755] If a child developed enuresis, a tiny bit of the tail of a fox or of a beaver tied to his belt, or a piece of badger skin for him to sit on, was thought to guarantee a cure.

854 To help the child who had trouble teething, it was considered wise to kill a mouse, skin it, take the back thigh and, after cooking [825 it well, rub on the gums. It is said by Coming Daylight that 757] the Crow used fish for this purpose. Some children have such a difficult time that their gums are very sore and their tongues even swell. Coming Daylight's grandmother and others knew how to [757] remedy that condition. The doctor, using a sharp-pointed bone, would lance the gums here and there where the teeth were coming, after allowing the gums to bleed, they would rub some powdered [751] root on the gums. As a preventive, old folks said to catch tiny baby mice and, after roasting them on the coals, feed them to the child. Coming Daylight, for instance, did that for her children, and none of them had any trouble with teething.

856 They would let babies crawl when they showed the inclination to do so, but the old women were sure that they always watched their babies more closely than mothers do today. They used to encourage them to walk by holding them up and helping them. It has been Coming Daylight's experience that boys learn to walk more quickly than girls. It may be, however, that more attention was given to boys.

198 The only expression the old women, or the younger ones for 856 that matter, could think of that could be considered "baby talk" was that babies, when very small and just beginning to talk, say: "I?" (prolonged and with strong glottal stop) if they do not like something or do not wish to take what is offered. This, together with *na'a* 'mother' and *ni'a* 'father,'[9]—which babies say properly

[9] These are vocative forms rather than descriptive forms.

2: Flannery E-5 (1940-1948) 1953
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has been given up, the Gros Ventres are so sunburned that their skin looks almost "black." Singer showed a small bag of red paint which she still had. She kept a piece of beaver castor in the bag so the paint would be sweet-smelling.

In the old days the Gros Ventres were early risers. Everyone got up while it was still dark, perhaps about three o'clock in summer and before seven in winter. It didn't make any difference whether a child might otherwise be favored, the rule was ironclad that all must rise early and that no one should lie abed. This applied to all—old people as well as to children.

One method of making sure that children would be strong was to take a beaver tail and slap the child on the hand and on the back while saying: "You will be good and strong." Mary, for instance, has seen her mother do this to all her grandchildren, hitting them so hard they almost cried. The beaver is considered a very strong animal since he cuts down big trees and drags them about.

Naming and Ear-piercing

Every individaul received a name shortly after birth. Many Gros Ventres, however, were, and are, known by names other than the original one. Names were changed for particular reasons, and in addition nicknames were frequently employed. Sometimes the first name was bestowed with considerable formality, but naming could be carried out in a variety of ways,[10] as the following examples show.

"Shortly after Coming Daylight was born, her father sent for his sister's husband and told him: 'Now I invited you to name your niece. I am giving you such-and-such kind of horse' (a bay, or a pinto, or whatnot). There was a big feast on this occasion and the lodge was full of people. The namer sat in the place of honor at the back of the lodge. He held the infant in his arms, told a war deed and said: 'Now I name her 'Taken A Prisoner.' Then he said a long prayer, starting with the usual formula, and wishing the infant a long life. He then handed the infant to the person to his left saying: 'Take Taken A Prisoner'; and so the infant was passed all around the lodge, each repeating the same to

[10] Cf. Kroeber, 1908, p. 182.

3: Cooper E-5 (1938-1940) 1957
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776 second element in the word is the name of the culture hero and trickster, who in the early mythical period taught the Gros Ventres how to pray to the Supreme Being, and how to make a living. The present-day Gros Ventres can give no clue to the etymological meaning of the word ni:həhat, nor can the writer analyze it. The word is also used for spider. The spider is in a certain sense sacred and, if it is killed, rain comes. The spider, the Gros Ventres say, can in spite of its small size do wonderful things with its web, can make it stay anywhere, can climb up and down it, and, in general, is usually master of the situation. The name of the trickster Ni:həhat is ordinarily translated as "white man" by English-speaking Gros Ventres and the translation is derived from a folktale concerning an escapade of Ni:həhat in which he had his hair cut off.[2] Thus it was that when the Gros Ventres first saw the white man with his hair cut short, in contrast to the Gros Ventres' long hair, they called him by the name of the trickster. Consequently, the name for the Supreme Being Ixteibəni:həhat is often rendered in English as "The One Above the White Man" or, in abbreviated form, "The One Above."

The second name for the Supreme Being is Behä:tixtĕ. The meaning, "the master, boss, head, leader of all" is quite clear (be:-, be:hi, "all"; änä:tixtĕ, "he is master, boss, head, of group or organization).[3]

The third name Ni:nänä'ätĕ, is said to be an older form which was still in use in the lifetime of The Boy and Thick, and it was felt that it had the meaning of "study, think, meditate," and that the whole might signify "the being who has control over everything by thought or will,"—a concept which, it may be added, would be quite in keeping with the Gros Ventre idea of the power of sheer thought or thought-wish by human beings. But this

[2] Kroeber, 1907, pp. 72-73, gives a version of this episode which is substantially the same as the one obtained by me.

[782] [3] In 1948 The Boy stated that the Gros Ventres addressed the Supreme Being by this term "when they wanted something big, e.g. when they prayed for a good harvest of all the things the earth produced. Thus we are saying a kind of mass prayer indicating that the Supreme Being owns everything. He made it and he owns it, and it was recognized that they depended on him." [R.F.]

3: Cooper E-5 (1938-1940) 1957
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Supernatural power too, while gotten immediately from animals, mountains (mountain spirits), and other creatures, through fasting and sleeping out on the hills, came ultimately from the Supreme Being, as mentioned previously. A person going out on a power quest, would pray first to the Supreme Being to command or compel the lesser being to give the power being sought. Power to doctor and to achieve war success and even to acquire wealth thus in the last analysis came from the Supreme Being. So too did the (supernatural?) power inherent in earnest wishes or thought wishes.

The Supreme Being also imparted knowledge and warnings to human beings through dreams and through his messenger, the crow. The crow on account of his relationship to the Supreme Being was a sort of sacred bird.[12] To illustrate the point the Boy told the following incident in the life of his father, Lame Bull. "Lame Bull on one occasion was sitting out on a hill and no one could get him to come back to camp. So some of his family got one of Lame Bull's wives, The Boy's mother, to go out and tell Lame Bull to come home right away as the camp was moving. As Lame Bull saw her coming, a crow flew over to him and said, 'This person who is coming is going to tell you something that is not true. Don't pay any attention to her.' Then the crow flew away. When The Boy's mother came within hearing distance of Lame Bull, the latter said to her: 'Don't say what you are going to say. Turn back.' But she kept on coming and told him her message, for which she got a scolding from him."

In general the Supreme Being was, as regards his interest in human welfare, the reverse of an otiose deity. His interest was a most active one.

Equally active was his interest in man's moral and social behavior. He was pleased at such moral or social acts as respect and help to the aged and care of the orphans, and was offended by grave breaches of the moral or social order. He bestowed

[12] In 1948 The Boy explained: "The crow is not the kind you see around here now, but a raven,—a bird that is smaller and more streamlined than the crow. The crow here in the fields cry like they are wounded, but this other bird has a shrill but melodious call more like a human being." [R.F.]

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776 bātč, "he (who) has gristle (tendon from back of neck of animal) nose," and "black hawk," a certain very large black-feathered hawk known also locally as "bullet hawk" (*Buteo sp.?*). Another name for Bha'a was "old man four parts of the earth." Bha'a, the thunderbird, as was appropriate, had dark or black feathers, and was a swift flier; his bill and feet were of the same material as back tendon (see Blood-Clot Story, No. 11 in Appendix).

778 776 796 In the Gros Ventre Sacrifice Lodge, or "Sun dance," Bha'a was represented near the top of the center pole as a bird, painted black, with a buffalo tail fastened to his head as a sort of plume, with a zigzag line descending from the bird almost to the ground and ending in a fork, and with a bunch of branches stuck in the fork of the center pole of the lodge to represent Bha'a's nest. Each [302] of the dancers painted all over in white had a bird representing Bha'a, painted in black with charcoal or paint on his upper center breast, with black zigzag lines ending in a fork from the bird's wings down each arm and forearm and from the bird's feet down each thigh and leg to his ankle, with a black zigzag line forked at each end across the forehead, and with a vertical red zigzag line forked at the lower end extending down from each eye. The [534] drum-head used in the Feathered Pipe rite had a red background on which the Thunderbird was represented in blue, with a yellow zigzag line on either side from the head to the wings. Bha'a entered prominently into both the Sacrifice Lodge and the Feathered Pipe rite.

776 ● 825 Any large strange animal might in the olden days be called Bha'a or even be looked upon as an embodiment or theophany of Bha'a.

One supposed theophany over which the present day Gros Ventres laugh heartily, is recorded on the occasion of their seeing their first mule. The story as told with verve and intense amusement by The Boy was as follows:

"The Gros Ventres used to move around a great deal. Once a mule, the first one the Gros Ventres had ever seen, got lost somehow, struck the Gros Ventres' trail, came to their camp and stopped. A Gros Ventre crier spied it and came back to camp

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announcing 'A something has come to camp. Come and look at it.' Everybody turned out. They sized up the mule and considered that it must be a Bha'a. They said: 'He must have come here for a purpose. Let's offer him things.' So they ran back, got things to offer him, returned bringing the children, and walked up and surrounded him. They prayed to the mule and laid one offering on him. Soon he was loaded down, he just stood there. After a while he brayed, at which all the people scattered and ran away. After they came to a stop, however, they decided: 'He must be pleased. That's why he made that noise. He will grant our request. We'll leave him here and move camp.' So they moved at once. But the mule followed them. Then they became afraid and ran away from him. This happened several times. At last they succeeded in hiding from him and losing him."

Bha'a's residence or nest, as described in the story of Blood-Clot, was on the top of a high mountain, where he dwelt with his mate and their two offspring, the young thunders (bha'a:niθan; -iθan, offspring, children). In the Blood-Clot story the sign of Bha'a's return to the nest was the appearance of a dark heavy cloud toward the sunset (west); of his mate's return, a white cloud in the west, and the arrival of each was marked by a blinding flash of lightning. The Thunderbird sometimes breaks wind and leaves a very bad odor. Two instances of this were recorded,—one when lightning struck Thick's house and left such a smell.

Bha'a had jurisdiction and control over storms, thunder and lightning, but as previously stated under the paramount rule and control of the Supreme Being, for whom he served as a sort of agent or subordinate, although with a considerable degree of freedom of action.

According to The Boy: "Bha'a has control of lightning and thunder, rules it, and releases it at will. He controls it, he is a sort of general manager; some one still higher controls Bha'a. While Bha'a rules the storm, he does so by a sort of delegated power; he has not the power himself.

"Bha'a's particular job is the storm, thunder and lightning. That is all he does. The Supreme Being is the ruler and uses Bha'a to run this part of the situation and manage it. Bha'a

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Chief Grass in one of the eye sockets. So it was always thought that he had killed that ghost."

There was a considerable fear of these bad ghosts who "bothered" or even seriously harmed human beings. Certain other ghosts were merely "earthbound," that is, they lingered around or came back because they were fond of their belongings—clothing, footwear, and so forth—which were buried with them. Such earthbound ghosts did no harm to human beings and were not supposed to be feared.[25]

Singer, then married to Crooked Arm, told of an occasion on which she ran away from her home. She wandered around at random and happened to stop at the spot where her sister was buried, and heard a voice [presumably her sister's] saying: "Just lie quiet. They are all looking for you." She did so, apparently without fear.

One informant, Al Chandler, narrated certain experiences of his early childhood and boyhood that suggest a somewhat deviant attitude toward ghosts. When he was about four years old, his mother died, and the morning after her burial he went to the grave and lay there, falling into a profound sleep. Not long after this, when his uncle died, and the body was laid on a bed in a lodge some distance off, he went to the lodge and crept under the blanket covering the body and went to sleep. Another time, while still very young, he got lost and around dark found himself at a place where there were a number of old graves. He lay down and slept the night there. These incidents were early childhood ones, when he hardly realized the meaning of death. At a later age, during his boyhood, everybody was afraid to go along a certain bit of woodland lest the ghosts bother them. Al wanted to find out for himself. So against advice of his father, and feeling a little "spooky," one night just after midnight he went through the stretch of brush and as he did so heard a sound behind him as of someone dragging a robe over gravel. Mustering up his courage he turned around quickly and saw a big old owl dragging its feathers and scarcely able to fly. When he got back home, he told his venture, and the old man [his father] laughed and said: "Owls

[25] For illustration, see Flannery, 1953, p. 203.

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sure will do that; they bother people and mock you when you talk or laugh." After that there was no ghost in that piece of brush. 775 [825]

On another occasion, Al was coming back on horseback with a group after a hand game. In a gap through which their route would take them, the others saw a yellow or blue light, like a lamp in the dark, moving this way and that. But Al could see nothing. The others went home by a roundabout way, but Al went alone through the gap, saw nothing, and met the others farther on.

Many, though not all, ghosts had the habit of whistling, and some talked in a whistling language.

Ghosts were apt to appear as owls or to hoot like owls, both in the shaking tent rite, to be described later, and on other occasions as illustrated in the following story which had been told The Boy by his father, Lame Bull.

"Lame Bull went on a war expedition. Seven Sioux were killed. Their bodies were left laying where the killing took place. A few years later Lame Bull and some comrades came near this place. As they reached it, seven owls flew from it. The owls did not fly away but just milled around the spot. They were the seven Sioux turned into owls." [825]

Children used to be told: "If you do not obey, the owls will catch you." If owls alighted on a lodge or house or hooted around very near on bush, tree or hill, this presaged the death of some one. Owls also gave warnings.[26] In these instances however we got no evidence that the owls were conceived of as ghosts. 825 775

Besides the ghosts there were other bad spirits, who "shot" people by projecting some small object into the body of a person and so causing illness.[27] This belief, we were told, was very widespread but we did not obtain many details regarding it. The following incident, narrated by Coming Daylight, may serve as illustration. 776 753

On one occasion when Coming Daylight was living where Fort Belknap now is and when her daughter was still a sack baby, the latter would not quit screaming. She would hold her head to one side and would not nurse, and they could not satisfy her with

[26] An example is given in Flannery, 1953, p. 93.
[27] Very probably connected with practice of witchcraft. [R.F.]

The lodges of the other people faced toward the east-southeast, from utilitarian consideration, since the prevailing and strongest winds were from the northwest in winter and west in summer. But the door of the keeper's lodge was toward the south, an orientation determined by the ritual position of the Pipe inside the lodge, namely, in the place of honor opposite the door with the stem pointing toward the rising sun.

The interior of the keeper's lodge was arranged as follows. In the center was the family hearth. About midway between this and the north segment was the square incense hearth, with the west half of black sand and the east of red. At the north, close to the wall, was the Pipe bed and place for the Pipe tripod. The bed, oriented east and west, was made of a buffalo robe over sage brush. At each end was a willow back rest, and over each rest a robe of summer-pelage (after winter coat completely shed) buffalo skin. The tripod, of three legs, was a little over five feet high. The Pipe bundle was either laid on the bed close to the wall or else hung on the tripod, always with the stem to the rising sun. The northern part of the lodge, including the incense hearth and Pipe bed and adjacent area, in all about one-third of the interior, constituted a sort of "sanctuary."

The keeper's sleeping bed, with its back rest toward the north, was a little removed from the Pipe bed, toward the west; the co-keeper's in a corresponding position toward the east. The Pipe child commonly slept on the Pipe bed, alongside of and to the south of the Pipe bundle, with his head to the east. If however the keeper or co-keeper wanted to sleep on the Pipe bed in order to dream, the Pipe child would then give place and sleep in his father's or mother's bed as the case might be. When any of the three slept on the Pipe bed, the Pipe bundle might hang on the tripod over them or else rest on the northern edge of the bed nearest the wall. In the latter case, the tripod was folded up and leaned between the Pipe bed and the co-keeper's bed. According to Thick the sleepers had to lie flat on their backs all night. According, however, to The Boy they were forbidden to do so and had instead to lie on their sides, because the turtle was closely associated with the Flat Pipe and if a turtle gets on its back it cannot right itself.

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besides the Pipe itself. The most important of these is a turtle shell, next in rank a "duck" pelt, and third a muskrat skin.* These represent the animals sent down by Earthmaker at the time of the great flood to dive for earth. The turtle and "duck" are more important than the muskrat as they were the only two who brought back earth. There is no beaver skin in the bundle; either it was barred or discarded, or, as The Boy put it, "the beaver must have gotten mad and started his own pipe and pipe rite." (Cf. under "Other Pipes," pp. 166-168.)

The turtle shell is kept enclosed in its own special case. Neither The Boy nor his father Lame Bull had ever seen this shell, which is said not to have been taken from its case and exposed since the early nineteenth century.

The "duck" is apparently, from the detailed description given us of plumage and habits, a grebe. This bird has a special sacredness in Gross Ventre thought on account of its part not only in the primeval making of dry land but also in present-day bird migration.

According to tradition, when the birds, who in the fall have gone where there is no winter, want in the spring to come back they talk the matter over and plan the flight to the north. On the migration flight the grebes, who are poor flyers, are carried on the backs of the larger birds such as the ducks, geese and cranes. The big bird is careful not to drop the little bird; if he does, he will have bad luck. If the small bird is killed by the fall, the big bird does not live long. When in migration one of the big birds breaks rank and flies around alone, the Gros Ventres know that he has lost his passenger, and it is up to him alone to find the dropped bird. Sometimes you can see a big bird hovering round the spot where he has dropped his small passenger, looking for him in order to pick him up again, and catch up with the

* In 1948 The Boy explained: "The muskrat and the beaver tried to bring back earth but failed. Beaver was banished from any connection with the Pipe. The keeper would not let anyone who used the beaver-castor perfume come near him or his lodge. But muskrat was taken back without ceremonial significance for no other purpose than to wipe the keeper's face, as well as faces of others, before the keeper painted them. So muskrat is still in the bundle and shares indirectly in the great Pipe ceremonies." [R.F.]

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migrating flock. When you hear the cries of the migrating geese, if you listen closely you can hear also the calls of the little birds. The big birds are very willing to carry the little ones, as the former get "holy things" and "are taught holy [powerful] ways" by the latter in payment for the ride, for the grebe is known to be a "big shot" who has extraordinary powers. The grebe in the Flat Pipe bundle is one of these little birds that are carried by the large ones on the fall and spring migration flight. In the bundle too are some feathers of the big birds. "Probably because they treat the grebe to a free ride, they bought their way into the bundle and so have a place of honor."

In the bundle, besides the turtle shell and grebe skin, are the dried pelts (not stuffed) of many other kinds of birds,—some of which The Boy cannot identify. These represent the birds who sang with joy at the first making of dry land after the flood. These bird pelts lie loose, not enclosed in a bag. In the olden times, Lame Bull told The Boy, the tobacco raised by the Pipe keeper was stored in these pelts for safe-keeping.

When the bundle is being wrapped, the Pipe enclosed and tied in its own case, is laid on these bird pelts as on a bed, with the turtle shell to the left of the Pipe "as you face the stem," and the grebe skin to the right. Turtle shell, grebe skin and bird pelts are all placed with the head toward the stem end of the Pipe, and are wrapped together with the Pipe in a special covering within the larger Pipe bundle proper.

The large bundle also contains a good-sized bag, rectangular and closed on three sides, in which are kept all or most of them in their own particular small cases or coverings, the following ritual articles: a muskrat skin representing the muskrat that dived unsuccessfully for earth at the flood, and used in the face-painting rite; paint and a painting stamp; supplies of peppermint and tobacco; rattles; the ritual moccasins of the keeper, co-keeper and Pipe child; a thunderstone;[1] the "official" shell necklace of the

[1] In the bundle there was a thunderstone encased in its own small bundle or sack. If, for instance, a person were suffering from stomach-ache, the co-keeper would reach into the Pipe bundle, without unwrapping it, take out the thunderstone, smudge it, make motions with or bite it, spit on the

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been told to do and put up the Drum Dance. Thus was the Drum Dance introduced among the Gros Ventres into their sacred dance system."

When Lame Bull told The Boy this story, the latter asked him: "Who was it who gave this dance and these horses?" And his father answered: "The killdeer." So the Drum Dance is owned by the killdeer (*Oxyechus vociferus*).

The Drum Dance ranked high in dignity among the Sacred dances. Lame Bull ranked it next after the Sacrifice Dance, and first in importance in the Drum-Dog-Kitfox-Crazy group, because, he told The Boy, the Drum Dance was "most difficult and complicated to carry out," and through it "more horses had come to the Gros Ventre tribe."

The Drum Dance was held only in fulfillment of a vow. The rite lasted the customary four days and nights, with a big feast each day. The Boy was uncertain whether a sweat-lodge ceremony was held during the Drum Dance.

The chief sacred objects used in the Drum Dance were, so far as we could learn, the very large drum, and the fur-wrapped crooked sticks which were carried by the dancers and which to judge from the origin story were four in number and were decorated as therein described. The dancers themselves were painted yellow all over their bodies, with black dots, representing hail, from the waist up.

Four of the Drum Dance songs, numbers 52-55, were recorded, as sung by The Boy, who had learned them from his father, Lame Bull. There were others which The Boy did not remember, nor did he know the ritual order in which they were sung.

Two of these four songs, numbers 52 and 53, are wordless, and were sung at good-time dances during the Drum Dance. Number 53 is the song that was sung by the men marching out of the dry lake-bed when the Drum Dance was first given to the starving Gros Ventre man by the killdeer. These dancing songs were lively ones, sung to fast time.

Song number 54 is difficult to translate as the meaning of two of one of the words was unknown. The Boy ventured the conjecture that the whole wording might possibly mean: "There are